

AMENDING COAST GUARD AUXILIARY AND RESERVE
ACT OF 1941, RELATING TO WOMEN'S RESERVE

DECEMBER 7, 1943.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. CLARK of Missouri, from the Committee on Commerce, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 1616]

The Committee on Commerce, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 1616) to amend the Coast Guard Auxiliary and Reserve Act of 1941, as amended, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with amendments and recommend that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The amendments are as follows:

Page 2, strike out lines 9 to 16, inclusive.

Pages 2 and 3, strike out section 2.

The purpose of these amendments is to make the provisions of the bill conform to the recent act (Public Law 183, 78th Cong., 1st sess., approved November 8, 1943), which amended the Naval Reserve Act with respect to the WAVES, and thus place the SPARS in same status in all respects as the WAVES. Public Law 183, as well as the immediate bill H. R. 1616, as both were introduced, contemplated among other things the elimination of the restriction of the Naval Reserve Act and the Coast Guard Reserve Act to the effect that WAVES and SPARS may not serve beyond the continental limits of the United States. However, during its progress through Congress, the former was revised so as to continue that restriction in effect. H. R. 1616 should be revised in the same manner so that the similar restriction of the Coast Guard Reserve Act will not be disturbed. The enactment of H. R. 1616 with the committee's recommended changes which are set forth above will accomplish this purpose.

The changes in section 402 of the basic law which would be made by the bill are explained in the report on the bill by the Committee on the Merchant Marine and Fisheries, House of Representatives, as follows:

The first amendment (to sec. 402 of the basic law) is desirable in that it has been found that the administration of the Women's Reserve of the Coast Guard is handicapped by the rigid limitation in the number of officers that may be

commissioned in the grade of lieutenant and lieutenant, junior grade, in view of the fact that due to the critical manpower situation the original program of utilizing members of the Women's Reserve to relieve male military personnel in the shore establishments has been greatly expanded, and the Coast Guard now visualizes the use of SPARS to at least double the number formerly provided. Furthermore, the distribution of the SPAR officers in the several grades according to administrative discretion is necessary because of the fact that grades should be given which are commensurate with the responsibilities and grades of the male officers relieved; and since the exact number in each grade cannot be ascertained definitely in advance, it is preferable to leave the distribution of the officers in the several grades to administrative discretion, to be determined by the actual needs of the service. SPAR officers originally appointed as ensigns or as lieutenants junior grade, after several months' experience frequently qualify for much more responsible duties than carried out in their original assignment, and when placed in more responsible billets should, of course, obtain the rank commensurate with the duty performed. It cannot be determined at this time the exact number in the various grades which will result from this amendment as the number, particularly in the higher grades, will be dependent wholly upon the expansion of the SPAR organization and the gradual infiltration into the Coast Guard organization of the officers and enlisted persons.

The bill would also eliminate section 406 from the present law. This section, which provides that disability and death benefits for SPARS shall be the same as those prescribed for civil employees of the United States, is no longer necessary having been superseded by the amendment, discussed above, to the Naval Reserve Act granting to all members of the Women's Reserve of the Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard, the same allowances and benefits as are provided for male members of those services.

The bill as proposed to be amended by this committee is approved by the Navy Department and the Coast Guard.

